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Alternative assessment of writing in learning English as a foreign language:

Analytical scoring and self-assessment

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May 1, 2015

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Alternative assessment of writing in learning English as a foreign language:

Analytical scoring and self-assessment

by

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Bridgewater State University

May 1, 2015

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In memory of my lovely and adorable primary teacher Ivone Fortes Nascimento.

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ABSTRACT

While the educational benefits of alternative assessment are being increasingly recognized and alternative assessment procedures introduced into the different educational levels, in Cape Verde, many EFL teachers are not aware of its importance. The main purpose of this thesis is to synthesize and review the available literature on alternative assessment tools to evaluate the writing of EFL students of Cape Verde secondary schools. The issue of accurate and fair assessment of students writing probably constitutes the major dilemma in both L1 and L2 writing fields, and EFL field is not an exception. The paper also aims to make Cape Verdean EFL teachers aware of the different types of alternative assessment that exist to assess students, focusing on analytical and self-assessment tool, as important means of gaining a dynamic picture of students' academic and linguistic development.

Keywords: Alternative Assessment, EFL Writing, Analytical Scoring, Self-assessment

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

“Assessment tends to shape every part of the student learning experience”

(Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2000, p. 24)

The assessment of writing has long been considered a problematic area for educational professionals, especially when it comes to evaluating the writing of ESL students. Due to students' different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the assessment of ESL writing becomes a challenging issue. ESL writing is affected by many factors such as English proficiency, mother tongue, home culture, and national style of written communication. Teachers have to take into consideration that ESL students might develop some skills more quickly than others, that they might have learned a different style format of writing, or even that they have different ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings. On the other hand some factors such as teachers linguistic backgrounds, prior training in assessment and previous experience can affect too the rating of ESL students writing.

In the Cape Verdean context, students start to learn English as a foreign language at the secondary level, and a great majority of teachers are still using the same traditional ways of teaching and assessing their students. According to Worley, traditional assessment as standardized tests is used to measure the amount of knowledge that the students acquired during a certain period of time. To put it in another way, knowledge exists separately from the learner. Consequently, students are in class working to

accumulate knowledge instead of acquire it daily. In addition many researchers in the field believe that students do not spend enough time on writing as a craft and are given too little choice about what they write (Vaughn & Bos, 2012, p. 285). While learning English as a foreign language the teachers I had did not give much attention to writing, nor did they teach us how to write in the American or British writing style. The teachers may believe that it is the duty of Portuguese teachers to teach students how to write and to practice writing. But it must be considered that the rules, style and structure of writing in Portuguese and English are different. To make the scenario more challenging, writing has many negative associations for students because it is often used as a form of punishment, and when writing is returned to students, it is covered with corrections (Vaughn & Bos, 2012, p. 285). As a result, most students write because it was assigned to them by teachers for grading purposes, instead of doing it for pleasure too.

Many teachers and administrators lack informal assessment preparation, and some writing teachers and writing program administrators view assessment as a punitive force for students, faculty, and progressive forms of instruction (Huot and O'Neil, 2009, p. 1). While I was an undergraduate student I had a class during a semester named "Theories and Practices of Assessment" in which we learned how to continuously evaluate students during an academic year. But taking into consideration how important and challenging this issue is, I believe that the class was not sufficient to make us aware of the importance of using different tools to effectively evaluate students in the classroom. Although there is no scientific proof, I believe that the majority of teachers are not well prepared to integrate new ways of evaluating their students.

Another big issue that affects the way that Cape Verdean teachers assess their students is the curriculum, and the limited time and materials teachers have available for them. As it happens in any education system, teachers are given a curriculum which they have to follow in order to meet stipulated expectations at the end of each semester. In a certain way teachers are forced to use a test-based standardized way to assess students understanding of what was taught. As stated by Casanave (2014) teachers rarely ask whether they need to assess their students or not because they prefer to follow the culture of assessment built by the education system (p.113). All EFL Cape Verdeans teachers may not be happy about the culture of assessment they are immersed in, but it is easier and more convenient for them to accept it. Time is another aspect to consider, as normally the alternative ways to evaluate students are time-consuming both for the teacher and for the students. So teachers rather prefer to rely on the assessment tools they feel more comfortable and secure using.

In order to understand better and provide some insight on the development on this topic, I decided to review the existing literature regarding the alternative ways of assessing ESL writing. My main purpose is to make EFL teachers in Cape Verde aware of the benefits and to recognize that alternative assessments are important means of gaining a dynamic picture of students' academic and linguistic development. Among the different alternative assessment methods, this thesis focuses are on the use of self-assessment and analytical scoring tools as effective and useful ones to assess ESL writing development. I found analytical scoring an effective and appropriate tool to be used by teachers in Cape Verde because it enables teachers to give students a detailed feedback on their writing, instead of just correcting students' grammar mistakes and assigning a

grade with no justification. This tool give students the opportunity to know where they did well and what they need to improve. Cape Verdeans teachers normally lead the class, especially when it's a language class, which students do not feel comfortable to participating. That is one the reasons why I found that self-assessment should also be used as it encourages students to be responsible of their own learning and to get them become active participators.

1.2. Definition of Assessment

Assessment is about determining what a student knows and can do and what a student doesn't know and cannot do. After collecting this information, teachers will be able to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with the knowledge learned in class. Then teachers will have to consider if they need to modify the teaching methods, activities, and materials, to improve students learning and development. Airasian (2005) defined assessment as a broad process of collecting, synthesizing and interpreting information in which testing, measurement, and evaluation play contributing parts (p.9).

1.3. Definition of Alternative Assessment

The term alternative assessment can be broadly defined as any assessment method that is an alternative to the traditional standardized tests. According to Mitchell (1992), the terms *alternative assessment*, *authentic assessment*, and *performance assessment* are all used in discussions of assessment reform. Although these terms are sometimes used

synonymously, they have different meanings. The term *alternative assessment* applies to any and all assessments that differ from the multiple-choice, timed, one-shot approaches that characterize most standardized and classroom assessments. The term *authentic assessment* conveys the idea that assessments should engage students in applying knowledge and skills in the same way they are used in the world outside of school. *Performance assessment* is a broad term, encompassing many of the characteristics of both authentic assessment and alternative assessment (as cited by Schurr 1999).

The purpose of this thesis is to make EFL Cape Verdean teachers aware that in conjunction with traditional assessment, alternative assessment tools should be considered to by EFL teachers in Cape Verde, in order to enhance students' academic performance and linguistic development. As writing is one of the most problematic areas to deal with, analytical scoring and self-assessment are tools that can effectively help both teachers and students.

CHAPTER 2 - ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

2.1. Advantages of using alternative assessment tools

The heightened emphasis on assessment come at a time of growing dissatisfaction with traditional, multiple-choice forms of testing. There have been some questions raised regarding traditional assessment which answers raised some criticisms. Do test scores represent significant learning outcomes? Do improvements in test scores represent significant learning outcomes? Are improvements in test scores the result of improved teaching and learning, or do they reflect a poor curriculum with students being “drilled and killed” on expected test content (Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters, 1992,p.5). As a result, there is a growing interest on exploring the alternative forms of assessment and an attempt to create them.

In the article entitled “The alternatives in language assessment”, Brown and Hudson (1998) presented some characteristic that make alternative assessment special and different according to different authors view. Aschbacher (1991) is one of the authors who have listed several common characteristics of alternative assessment stating that they

- 1- Require problem solving and higher level thinking,
- 2- Involve tasks that are worthwhile as instructional activities,
- 3- Use real-world contexts or simulations,
- 4- Focus on processes as well as products, and
- 5- Encourage public disclosure of standards and criteria (as cited in Derakhshan, A., Rezaei, S., & Alemi, M. 2011) .

Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992, p.6) have presented a similar set of characteristics. According to their point of view, alternative assessments:

- 1- Require students to perform, create, produce, or do something;
- 2- Tap into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills;
- 3- Use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities;
- 4- Approximate real-world applications;
- 5- Ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgment; and
- 6- Call upon teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles (as cited in Brown and Hudson, 1998, p. 654).

Huerta-Macias (1995) says that alternative assessment

- 1- Are nonintrusive in that they extend the day-to-day classroom activities already in place in a curriculum,
- 2- Allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day,
- 3- Provide information about both the strengths and the weaknesses of students, and
- 4- Are multiculturally sensitive when properly administered (as cited in Brown and Hudson, 1998, p. 654).

There are a number of advantages of using alternative assessment tools which often make them more useful than standardized tests, however, there is no one right way to assess students. For better results teachers should consider alternative assessment to be used along with some standardized tests, multiple-choice tests, as a balanced curriculum requires a balanced approach to assessment.

2.2. Key aspects of assessment validity and reliability

For teachers to make good educational decisions, the assessment information that is collected must be sufficient in order to give usable feedback to the student progress, strengths, and weakness, to inform policy, e.g. Validity and reliability are two key concepts that help teachers determine whether assessment information is appropriate to report a decision. Although there are others important factors such as equity and feasibility, the quality of an assessment achievement depends on its ability to support valid inferences of student's achievement (Hout and O'Neill, 2009, p. 82)

Mabry (1999) defined validity as an “integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores or others modes of assessment”. She also added that “validity is an inductive summary of both the existing evidence for and the potential consequences of score interpretation and use” (p. 83). In a more simple way validity determines whether an assessment measures what it was intended to measure in order to help teachers make appropriate activities and choices, students final report and grades.

According to Airasian & Russell (2008), reliability refers to the “stability or consistency of assessment information, i.e., whether it is typical of a student's behavior”. In order to check for assessment reliability, they suggested a question for teachers to ask themselves, “Would the assessment information for this person or class be similar if it were gathered at some other time?” (p.15).

The extent to which a decision is valid depends on the extent to which the assessment information is sufficient for making a given decision. Unless assessment

information is appropriate for a decision and the information is interpreted accurately, valid decisions will not occur (Airasian & Russell, 2008, p.16). The question all teachers should ask to know about the validity of her/his assessment is “Am I collecting the information for the decision I want to make”? For any decision, some forms of evidences and types of assessment will lead to more valid decisions than others. According to Huerta- Macias (1995) alternative assessments are in and of themselves valid, due to the direct nature of the assessment. These types of assessments are consistent because of the detailed examination of the procedure. They allows teachers to use multiple tasks, clear evaluation criteria, and they allow teachers to triangulate any decision making process with different sources as the students, families and teachers (As cited in Brown and Hudson 1998, p.655). But Brown and Hudson (1998) believe that the statements by Huerta-Macias are too general and shortsighted for teachers that really want to make responsible decisions about their students.

To elaborate, Brown and Hudson (1998) stated that whether using alternative assessment or other types of assessment, the designers and users must be careful when designing, piloting, analyzing, and revising the procedures so that the reliability and validity of the procedures can be studied, demonstrated and improved later on. To conclude on this matter Brown and Hudson added “the issues of reliability and validity must be dealt with for alternative assessments just as they are for any other type of assessment- in an open, honest, clear, demonstrable, and convincing way” (p. 656).

Overall, a fair and valid assessment as noted by Casanave (2014), treats all students equally without bias against students’ different cultures, background knowledge of content, students’ experiences (or lack of them) with particular assessment

instruments, different conditions of writers at the time they write a piece for assessment, or even different environments for writing (p. 119).

2.3. Types of Alternative Assessment

Mabry (1999) stated that the 90s became a period of experimentation with a variety of assessment techniques as teachers start looking for better means for recognizing students learning. She also added that teachers have always assessed students' performance, always done performance assessment, so some of the "new" methods are continuations or revisions of long-standing practice (p.16). These methods, as a group, have sometimes been called alternative assessment to distinguish them from standardized testing and have also been called authentic assessment, direct assessment and performance assessment. Alternative assessment procedures include checklists, rating scales, rubrics, journals, logs, videotapes and audiotapes, portfolio, conferences, diaries, self-assessment and peer-assessment. Below is the description of some of the listed alternative assessment tools and an example of each can be found in the appendix.

2.4. Portfolio

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) describes a portfolio as "a collection of student's work that exhibits to the student (and/or others) the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s). This collection must include student participation in selection of portfolio content: the criteria for selection; the criteria for judging merit; and evidence of student self-reflection" (as cited by Wolcott and Legg, 1998, p. 36). In other words portfolio is a collection of information by and about a

student to give a broad view of his or her achievement, which contains multiple samples of student work in one or more areas. It may also contain narrative descriptions, tests, reading logs, grades or other evaluations by teachers, students' reflection or self-evaluation, responses from parents, suggestions for future work, and audio or photos.

Some educators have stressed that teachers need to consider the purposes of the portfolio before they start using it. Teachers need to explore, with the help of students, whether the portfolio will show students' progress during the school year, if it will show their best work, or if it will show students' ability of various writing assignments did throughout the school year (Wolcott and Legg, 1998, p. 37). Moreover, Wolcott and Legg (1998) noted that teachers need to consider what the specific role or function that portfolios will have in the class, for example, whether it will be used for grading purposes or if it will illustrate students work. It is also important for teachers to think about who the audience for the portfolio will be; an audience that may be parents, school officials, to students in other classes or the students themselves (p.38).

If well used, portfolios bring some advantages for both teacher and students. It encourages students to reflect on what they have produced, developing their self-assessment skills. It can also give students the opportunity (if permitted by their teachers) to choose some of the entries that they want to include on it, giving students the opportunity to get involved on their own learning process (Wolcott and Legg, 1996, p.40). As suggested by Peregoy and Boyle (2013), teachers can assist students with becoming more aware of their best work. Teachers should also place all students tests, running records, and others materials in the portfolio to show students their progress throughout the year or semester. Moreover, teachers can use students' portfolio in the

next year's classroom to provide insights for the new teachers about student's progress (p. 424).

Once students have enough materials in their portfolio, teachers would have to evaluate it. Peregoy and Boyle (2013) believes that students should have models of excellent, good, and fair work so that they have a notion of what a teacher is expecting, and why she/he gave an assigned grade for a particular student. In addition, if teachers want to give students specific grades for a work in the portfolio, Peregoy and Boyle recommends setting up a point system. It will consist of teachers placing a scoring sheet in each portfolio that describes the number of points for fair, good, or excellent papers. For example, an excellent paper might be worth 10 points, a good paper worth 8 points, and so on. Finally, teachers has to create a portfolio system designed to work for him/her. A portfolio checklist may help teachers track students' progress. But every teacher's checklist will be different, depending on the age of the students, the kinds of writings/readings the teacher expects, the skill level of the students in the class, and the goals of the curriculum (p. 426).

Although in Cape Verde students learning English as a foreign language may not write enough to produce a writing portfolio, it could be used by an English teacher. Besides the different types of writing, students could include descriptions of assignments for each piece of writing, copies provided by the teacher, their summative tests, works produced in class, teachers' comments, or some interesting illustrations from magazine or journal pages that students may find relevant to include. Once students produce a significant number of writing, and have them in the portfolio, teacher will have to assess

it. The next section will show that holistic scoring can work effectively when assessing students writing in a portfolio.

2.5. Holistic Scoring

As explained by Miles Myers (1980), holistic scoring is based on the evaluation of a piece of writing as a whole, its overall impression, rather than to evaluate separately the different aspects such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, or mechanisms (as cited by Wolcott and Legg, 1998, p. 71). Holistic scoring is commonly used in direct writing assessment (which is a sample of students writing obtained under controlled conditions and then evaluate by one or more writing assessment scholars), and sometimes in portfolio assessments as well. This tool is also used to evaluate a set of papers that have been written on the same topic development and writing procedures, so that papers can be compared in terms of quality. Teachers assessing a paper holistically have to read papers quickly and rate them on a scale, often from 1 to 6, with 6 as the best and 1 as the worst score (see appendix 2). Usually two readers evaluate each essay to increase the reliability of the score. Although holistic scoring approach basically rewards students for what they did well, this does not mean that the problems are overlooked or minimized. If, for example, teachers found a few mechanical errors in a spontaneous essay, they tend to ignore the mistakes, as it is a first draft, sometimes written under pressure. In such case, the mechanical problems do not affect the final outcome of the paper. But if, on the other hand, the paper has a lot of mechanical errors that the reader may have a hard time to understand the meaning of the text, then the mechanical errors are likely to lower any score assigned (Wolcott and Legg, 1998, p. 71).

Peregoy and Boyle (2013) mentioned several advantages of holistic scoring over traditional methods of evaluating and grading papers in the classroom. First, teachers develop the anchor paper along with the students, by selecting writing done by students as a response to teacher instruction, and then specify writing scores that make the papers low or high on the scoring scale. Second, holistic scoring helps students evaluate a paper based on its communication of ideas rather than on correctness alone. Third, holistic scoring provides models for good writing, making the traits for good writing explicit for students. Students can apply the models provided by the teachers to their own composing, and they can evaluate their own writing holistically, thinking critically in order to receive the highest evaluation (p. 299).

Based on Miles Myers's (1980) work, Peregoy and Boyle (2013) recommended some procedures for holistic assessment with students. First, teachers must discuss with students a topic of their interest, making sure that all students are able to write about it, for example, "Write about a person who has influenced you", or "Write about a favorite object you have". After they select the topic, students should think about it, in order to brainstorm some ideas and take notes. Teachers must explain that on the next day, students will have time to write an essay on the topic. On the next day, students will have time to review their prewriting notes and to think about the topic before they start to write. It is a good idea for a teacher to ask another teacher to have his/her students writing on the same topic, using the same structure. Then the first teacher will use those unfamiliar papers to discuss assessing and scoring papers with students. Teachers would have to go through the papers and using a scale of 1 to 6, for example, select papers that

clearly represent each score on the scale, and after select the representative papers to become models that the students will use to score their own writing (p. 299).

As noted by Wolcott and Legg (1998) holistic scoring has been used increasingly as a way to evaluate writing in large-scale assessments because of the speed that the papers can be read and because of the “substantial inter reader reliability rate that can be achieved with ongoing training” (p. 87).

In Cape Verde EFL teachers use an approach similar holistic scoring to evaluate students work, as they evaluate their writing as a whole, giving a single grade for the paper. However, teachers may not have a scoring rubric with specific criteria, nor do they assign a score for each criterion in holistic scoring. Therefore holistic scoring rubric are more helpful for teachers than students.

In addition, as far as I know they don't do the substantial inter reader reliability, but it will be good for teachers as they got to work with others teachers to evaluate the same paper, increasing the reliability of it, and it will also help them save some time. However, in a different subject area and depending of students' school level, holistic scoring could work best, especially at the university level. As I mentioned before, students learning English as a foreign language need more than a single grade to improve their writing and to understand why they had a specific grade. Indeed, they need some elaborated feedback on the different aspects of writing. So teachers should first consider the grade and level of student's proficiency, as well as the purpose of the writing, in a particular subject before considering using this method.

2.6. Checklists, Rating Scales, and Rubrics

Checklists are a written list of performance criteria. As a student's performance is observed or a product is judged, the scorer determines whether the performance or the product meets each performance criterion included in the checklist. Checklists are diagnostic, reusable and capable of charting students' progress (see appendix B). They provide a detailed record of students' performances, and they should be shown to students to help them see where improvement is needed (Airasian & Russell, 2008, p.218).

If a teacher needs to do more than simply reporting on students' behavior, he or she would have to use rating scales. Rating scales are checklists that require teachers to make a more detailed judgment, as teachers have to score students' performance on a scale from high to low (see appendix C). An advanced form of a rating scale is a rubric. Airasian and Russell (2008) suggests that rubrics are a set of clear expectations or criteria used to help teachers and students focus on what is valued in a subject, topic, or activity. Unlike a checklist that simply lists the criteria, a rubric provides a description of the expected level of performance for each criterion. Teachers can have criteria for different levels of performance, which are usually descriptive rather than numerical (see appendix D). The descriptions help teachers focus their instruction and their instructions and their scoring of student work on the important aspects included in the rubric. The descriptions also help students better understand what teachers expect of them for a given performance or product (p. 223). In addition, they reduce the amount of time teachers spend evaluating students work, and they allow teachers to accommodate heterogeneous classes.

Montgomery (2000) recommended that teachers may want to design and use their own rubrics. First, teachers need to clearly choose the evaluation criteria; second, teachers should include specific feedback on students work; finally, teachers need to encourage students to become involved in their own assessment (as cited by Worley, n.d)

Cape Verdean English teachers could easily and effectively incorporate one these three alternative assessments into their teaching. Checklists, rating scales, and rubrics could be used to evaluate students' participation in class both orally and in writing, when presenting in group or individual work, e.g. Considering the three scoring system I would recommend Cape Verdean teachers to rely more on rating scales and rubrics. Although its elaboration may be more complex than checklist, it will give teacher and students a more detail description of the work to be evaluated, and students will know the expected level of performance for each criterion.

2.7. Conference

There are several types of conferences within the school environment, and teacher-students conference is one of them; according to Brown and Hudson (1998), teacher-student conference involves a student agreement with his/her teachers to discuss a particular subject learnt in class or a writing assessment that the student did not understand. During the appointment, teachers can focus on student's views and difficulties about the learning process while producing a piece of work or to get help to revise their compositions. Some of the advantages of using this alternative assessment is that teachers can encourage students' reflection on their own learning processes, as well as inform, observe, mold and gather information about students. On the other hand one of

the disadvantages are that they are time-consuming, difficult and subjective to grade, and normally teachers do not score or rate it at all (p. 663)

Peer conference is another type of conference suggested by Worley (n.d), which consists of a group of five to six students who meet to evaluate the written work of the group members. The main purpose is for students to share their work to provide each other help, ideas, feedback, correcting grammar mistakes, before turn in the paper to be graded by the teacher (Worley, n.d)

Traditional report cards and notes sent to parents with students seems not to be an appropriate way to report on students' progress. For that reason parent-student and teacher conference is by far the most effective way to let parents about their progress in school.

In Cape Verde, a teacher normally has a time set during the week for parents-teacher- student conferences. And if teachers feel that they really need to schedule an hour with a particular student, due to behavioral or grade issues, a teacher-student conference can be schedule. But teachers need to set up a time for students to meet with her/him in case students need extra support or help, although teachers may not get paid for that extra time. Peer conference would work in the Cape Verdean context , as in Cape Verde students normally live close to each other, making easy for them to meet. Teachers should then encourage them to do peer conferencing, and always try to give them some support, and how to work effectively in group.

The use of alternative assessments can create an even more integrated and positive experience for both teachers and students. In a class with a diverse population, it is not easy for teachers to evaluate all students using the same standardized assessment

tool. Alternative assessments such as portfolio, rating scales, rubrics, checklists, observations, can provide teachers with a more complete, realistic and culturally sensitive view of each student. The next chapter will focus in one of the alternative assessments tools I focused, the analytical rubric, pointing out its advantages and challenges, including some tips for teachers to develop and use them, as well as a sample to be used by Cape Verdean EFL teachers.

CHAPTER 3 - ANALYTICAL SCORING

3.1. Scoring rubrics

When teachers plan how a paper will be evaluated and make it available, this will help students have a clear idea of what the rater is expecting. Informing students of the scoring criteria that will be used can also improve the validity of the assessment as students tend to focus on what the teacher is looking for (Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 239). Stiggins (1987) “has persuasively argued that the specification of performance criteria is the most important aspect of developing effective performance assessments” (as cited in Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 261). He also adds that teachers must have a clear idea of what they want students to produce- a notion of poor and extremely good performance- so that teachers can teach students to perform and evaluate their performance (Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 261). Analytical scoring rubrics are one of the ways available to evaluate a performance or any product resulting from that performance.

3.2. Analytical scoring rubric

According to Linn & Miller (2005), a scoring rubric is a set of guidelines to be used by the rater evaluating the responses and performance of students. A scoring rubric normally has some categories being assessed that may distinguish between advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and beginning levels of students’ performance (p.239).

Airisian & Russel (2008) note that “However, teachers need to consider that attempting to score more than three or four separate categories may make the score confusing and time-consuming. Additionally, this tool is best used when teachers want to assess multiple objectives in a single essay and to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses (Airisian & Russel, 2008, p.187-188).

Additionally, Wolcott & Legg (1998) stated that there are various types of analytical scales that can be used in the classroom for instructional purposes. Unlike the scales used for large, external assessments, classroom scales can be adapted by teachers to meet the goals of a particular assignment. Sometimes a teacher may use four levels, rather than three, and add minor or extensive comments besides the criteria a teacher chooses to evaluate. These comments might help students understand what the reader is looking to evaluate and adds more perspective rather than just giving a single grade (p. 106)

3.3. Advantages of using Analytical scoring

The analytical scoring is an effective tool for teachers to give students detailed feedback about their writing, emphasizing the strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are able to choose the scales they want to evaluate, taking into consideration the writing assignment and the teacher's goals, with an attempt to distinguish between the elements of form and content. Readers using analytical scoring do not rate the writing as a whole, having the opportunity to focus on providing feedback in discrete areas (Wolcott & Legg, 1998, p. 113).

Students always want, for example to know why they score four out of six on a writing essay, and sometimes they tend to compare with their classmates to get the answer. Also, they may not receive their essays back, not having the chance to evaluate their papers against a scoring rubric, consequently, the students get frustrated by the lack of information. Teachers use analytical scoring with the hope that students will understand where the writing needs to be improved, and to identify where students' strengths and weaknesses are.

Wolcott & Legg (1998) point out that as an assessment measure, analytical scoring has the advantage of being more comprehensive than primary trait scoring. Primary traits focus on how well writers have fulfilled the specific traits of a particular assignment according to its purpose and audience, whereas analytical scoring goes beyond those specific features to evaluate other dimensions of the task (p. 116). For example, in expository process essay, the reader would evaluate not only the clarity and sequence of the writer's explanation, but also the structure and style used to discuss the process. Thus, as argued by Wolcott & Legg (1998) the comprehensiveness of the feedback provided by this tool seems to be the major strength of analytical scoring (p. 116).

3.4. Challenges of using Analytical Scoring

According to Wolcott & Legg (1998), one of the main challenges of analytical scoring is the fact that the comprehensive scoring of each entry takes time and effort, and for this reason, large scale assessment tend to be more costly (p.116). This shows that analytical scoring is more appropriate to be used when scoring students essay one at the time instead of using it to evaluate portfolios.

In addition to the factors of time and cost, another challenge of analytical scoring is the difficulty of interpreting what each category means. For example a student may use a certain word ambiguously, but the reader may find it difficult to distinguish it from "wording". Besides knowing the categories to include, its challenging to balance the need for providing meaningful information with the need for conserving time required to evaluate the task (Wolcott & Legg, 1998, p. 116-117). For example, it is difficult to

know, whether to group grammar with mechanics or development with organization; if the categories are too broad, it will be difficult for readers and teachers to distinguish certain issues, and students will not have much information to learn. But if, on the other hand, there are too many fine distinction made, the task will become too difficult to do and to be interpreted (Wolcott & Legg, 1998, p. 117).

Another problem in identifying appropriate categories for analytical scoring, according to Faigley et al. (1985), is when the analytical scoring is to be used on different types of writing. Some categories that can be applicable to one type of writing may not necessarily be relevant to another (as cited in Wolcott & Legg, 1998, p. 117). So teachers should consider to adapt the analytical rubrics for each assignment. Besides the challenge of selecting the appropriate categories, it may be difficult to understand what the ratings themselves mean. The rating levels, which often includes degrees such as “to some extend” versus “often”, or “weak” versus “poor”, can be “semantically troublesome and add to the difficulty in providing an analytic rating of multiple elements in an entry” (Wolcott & Legg, 1998, p. 117).

Every scoring method has different approaches, emphasis, and scales, which is why it is important to know the strengths and limitations of each method. Whether in terms of theory, of research, or of practice itself, none of the scoring approaches alone is optimal for all situations, so the reader have to be able to choose the appropriate one depending on the purpose of assessment, the sources available and the information achieved. Wolcott & Legg (1998) have presented the advantages and disadvantages of using analytical scoring, it is the responsibility of teachers to take them into consideration to do the appropriate choices to obtain the information needed (p. 119).

3.5. Tips for teachers: Developing and using scoring guides in the classroom

Teachers should be conscious that it is important for students to have the opportunity to work with scoring guides, no matter the rubric chosen by the teacher. It gives them the chance to see the importance of writing criteria and to gain some practice in assessing their own or their colleagues' piece of writing (Wolcott & Legg, 1998, p. 121). Normally teachers prefer to use scoring guides that have been created by others than creating specific guides that meet their specific goals and purpose with the assignment.

For this reason Wolcott & Legg (1998) have suggested some tips for teachers while creating their own analytical rubric. Teachers should first determine the central elements that they wish to include in a particular guide and decide how broad or specific the guide should be. For example, will it include the broad category "mechanics and usage", or will it include several subcategories for this area. Then teachers can decide, with the help of students, the rating system they will use to evaluate each category- a verbal system, such as "excellent" or "proficient", or a numerical system to convey the range of quality (p. 123)

Airisian & Russel (2005), as well, have suggested some steps that teachers must follow to ensure that the essays are scored objectively. Although the suggestions are time-consuming, they are necessary to have valid scores for decision making. They advise teachers to define what a good answer is before assigning an essay, so that it comes easier to apply uniform scoring criteria. Then they decide and tell students in advance how handwriting, punctuation, spelling, and organization will be scored. In the

process of scoring teachers should try to score students anonymously, as it may help keep the scoring objective by eliminating the influence of past students' performance. Lastly, before scores of an essay items are finalized, read essay a second time after initial scoring and if possible rescore the it sing the same criteria used before (p.188).

3.6. Sample of an analytical scoring rubric to be used by EFL Cape Verdeans teachers

Taking into consideration some of the tips presented by Wolcott & Legg (1998) and having in mind both the advantages and disadvantages of using analytical rubrics as a way to evaluate students writing performance, I developed an analytical rubric that can be used by Cape Verdean English teachers or any other ESL/EFL teacher to asses students from grade 8th to 10th and 11th and 12th grade (see APPENDIX D and F)

As I found an analytical scoring with much details too complex, I decided to develop a primary traits rubric, to be used with EFL students from 8th to 10th grade. Wolcott and Legg (1998), stated that primary traits focus on how well writers have fulfilled the specific traits of a particular assignment (p. 116). I chose the same categories for both rubrics, each with a different language level, and they are the ones that I believe anEFL English teacher might look to when evaluating an EFL students writing. The four categories are appropriate for both teachers and students; more categories would make the score too confusing and time consuming. The language used to describe each element is simple, so that students can understand what teachers were looking for in the paper. But even if teachers use a simple language, they should explain and discuss with students all the criteria's, and consider to make any modifications if needed. Depending on the

teacher and the purpose of using the analytical rubric, he or she may find one of the categories irrelevant or may find that another category may be important to be included.

Overall, the available literature show how effective and useful analytical scoring can be, if used when teachers want to assess multiple objective in a paper. The fact that teacher using this rubric have to plan on how a paper will be scored, will help students have a clear idea of what teachers want them to produce, so that they can stay focused, improving both the quality and validity of the work and the grade. Although the feedback is optional, I encourage teacher to do it whenever they feel is necessary to do it, as it enables teacher to better explain a particular issue that may not clearly explained in the categories.

CHAPTER 4 - SELF-ASSESSMENT

4.1. Definition of self-assessment

As noted by Rolheiser and Ross (2001) teachers educational contexts are changing in a fast and dramatically way, and teachers have to accomplish all the ever-increasing and conflicting demands (p. 44). If teachers value students' participation, equality, inclusiveness, and social justice, then the schools have to be places where students lead and are responsible for their own learning.

Hargreaves & Fullan (1998) defines self-assessment as students judging the quality of their work, based on evidence and explicit criteria, for the purpose of doing better work in the future. They also provided a simple definition for younger students defining it simply as a judging of quality of students work (as cited in Rolheiser and Ross, 2001, p.46).

Self-assessment requires students to rate their own language and worked produced, whether through performance self-assessments, comprehension self-assessments, or observation self-assessments. According to Brown & Hudson (1998) performance self-assessment requires students to read a situation and decide how well they would respond it. In a similar way, comprehension self-assessments require students to read a situation or write a passage and decide how well they would comprehend it or how well the writing was. In contrast, observation self-assessments require students to listen to audio, or to the recordings of their own language performance and decide how well they think they have performed (p. 666).

4.2.Importance of Self-Assessment

The literature available shows an increase toward the use of self-assessment, and the many studies conducted among students found that peer-assessment and self-assessment play an important part in the development of students learning (Steinkruger, 2007, p.3). Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and William (2004) collaborated with a group of teachers with the purpose of focusing on assessment practices and found that peer-assessment and self-assessment play an important part in the development of students learning. According to them “students can achieve a learning goal only if they understand that goal and can see what they need to do to reach it. So self-assessment is essential to learning” (Steinkruger, 2007, p.3). Students who have the opportunity to self-assess, are then seen as active learners, who are responsible for their own learning, and who are aware of when they are learning and when they are not.

McDonald (2002) conducted a study using a random sample of 570 high school students, to research self-assessment techniques used without formal training. It was found out that “high school students perceived self-assessment tasks as contributing directly to a better performance in their school work” (as cited by Steinkruger, 2007, p.4). As it was also found that self-assessment increases the desire for high school students to achieve. In a different study Brookhart, Andolina, Zuza, and Furman (2004) researched forty-one students in two third grade classrooms involving three teacher, and they found that student’s self-assessment resulted in deeper meaning for the students (Steinkruger, 2007, p.4).

In order to better understand the relation between self-evaluation and its contribution for learning, Rolheiser (1996) developed a theoretical model behind self-evaluation. Research indicates that self-evaluation plays a key role in fostering an “upward cycle of learning” (Rolheiser et al., 2013).

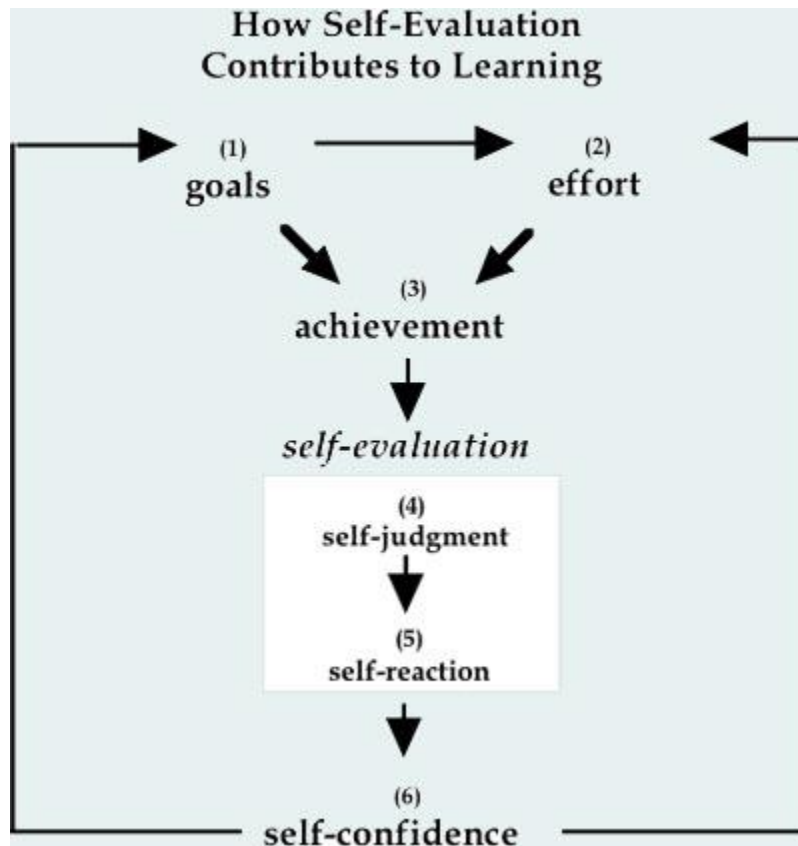


Figure 1. Upward cycle of learning

As stated by Rolheiser and Ross (2013), when students evaluate positively their own work, self-evaluations encourage students to set (1) higher goals and (2) commit more personal resources or effort to them. The (1) combination of goals and (2) effort, (3) equals achievement. A student’s achievement results in (4) self-judgment, such as a student making the question, “Were my goals met?” The result of the self-judgment is (5) self-reaction, or a student responding to the judgment with the question, “How do I feel

about that?” Goals, effort, achievement, self-judgment, and self-reaction all can combine to impact (6) self-confidence in a positive way (p.3).

Teachers have to recognize that self-evaluation is the combination of the self-judgment and self-reaction components of the model, and if we can teach students to self-evaluate better we can contribute to an effective upward cycle of better learning.

Teachers’ involvement in students’ self-evaluation is extremely important, they must teach students how to do so effectively, so that students will always be on an upward path (Rolheiser and Ross, 2013).

4.3.Advantages of using Self-assessment

According to Kastrati (2013) there are three kinds of student benefits that have been observed in studies conducted by the researchers of the *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, and other researchers. Cognitive achievement is one of the benefits, especially when it comes to evaluate narrative writing skills (p. 431). Students tend to become better writers as they learn how to evaluate their piece of writing, and the effects are even stronger for the weakest writers. That is why self-evaluation training is extremely important, especially for the low group, as they are less certain about what their teacher consider to be a good writing. However, regardless of the level of the students, all students benefit from the focusing effect of joint criteria development and use (Kastrati, 2013, p. 433).

The second benefit is related to students’ motivation. Students that know how to evaluate themselves have more chances to complete and succeed in difficult tasks, as well as become more confident about their ability. Third, when teachers give students the opportunity to actively participate in their evaluation, their attitudes toward evaluation

become more positive. Students who are assessed over years in the same way (traditional testing), tend to get “bored” with it and question its effectiveness, especially the older students. But when self-evaluation is used combined with other forms of assessment, students are more likely to found that evaluation is fair and worthwhile (Kastrati 2013, p. 433).

Teachers also benefit when allowing students to self-evaluate their work. Self – assessment is unique in asking students to reflect on their performance. Traditional testing provides teachers with no information about students’ states of mind while doing their performance, what interpretations they made about the quality of their work, and the goals they have in relation to feedback. But self-evaluations elicit information about students’ effort, persistence, goals, attributions for success and failure, and their beliefs about their competence. All this information will give teachers a fuller understanding of why students perform as they do (Kastrati 2013, p. 433).

Teachers who participate in teaching self-evaluation grow more confident in their skills as teachers and use a greater variety of assessment techniques in the classroom. Teachers also become more efficient, individually and collectively, as they set higher goals for themselves and their students. As a result, they are more willing to engage in instructional experiments, will try to break barrier to implementation, and have higher students’ achievement (Rolheiser and Ross, 2013)

4.4.Challenges of using self-assessment

According to Bound (1989) empirical research studies have been conducted to evaluate aspects that can make self-assessment inconsistent. Many teachers, parents and students believe that there is a tendency for students to over- or under-rate their own work, regardless of the quality of their performance. It was noted that weaker students have the tendency to over-rate their performance and stronger students have the tendency to do the opposite. The influence of formal assessment appears to moderately increase the tendency for students to over-rate themselves (p. 23). I believe that regardless of their age and academic level, students need to have a very high degree of competency, so they can be able to analyze the errors that they have made and their performance during the course. Students can also be undecided or if they haven't received enough feedback from the teacher, they may have doubts regarding to the progress that they have made; therefore they can provide wrong answers, making the self-assessment process invalid.

If used properly self-assessment is time consuming, so as teachers we have to plan in advance and write an adequate format, so it doesn't take students too long to answer it, and so it is easy to check. Another disadvantage is that sometimes, self-assessment is only suitable for intermediate to higher levels, because they are more aware of the importance of the process, and they analyze a lot more easily; in addition students may lack maturity and are not ready to have a self-assessment task as they are not aware of the seriousness or importance of the process (Oscarson, 2009, p. 75)

But despite these drawbacks presented, there are a number of reasons why self-assessment should be encouraged in any type of class and with all students. The fact that it promotes learning in a plain and simple way, motivating and broadening the range of

experience with assessment for both students and teachers, etc., compensates for the challenge and disadvantages of adopting it.

4.5. A four-stage model for teaching student self-evaluation

Hargreaves & Fullan (1998) in one stage of their research interviewed some users of cooperative learning methods, and from that have developed a four stage procedure to teach students their role in self-evaluation, presented below:

Stage 1 - involve students in defining the criteria that will be used to judge their performance. Involving students in determining the evaluation criteria is a good beginning. Imposing school goals, or influence students preferences is not likely to be as successful as creating a shared set that students perceive to be meaningful. Workplace studies, for example, indicate that involving employees in making decisions about their work increases satisfaction and goal commitment. In addition to increasing students commitment to instructional goals, negotiating intentions enables teachers to help students set goals that are specific, immediate, and moderately difficult, characteristics that contribute to greater effort (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998).

Stage 2 - how to apply the criteria to their own work. If students have been involved in a negotiation in Stage 1, the criteria that result will be an integrated set of personal and school goals. Since the goals are not entirely their own, students need to see examples of what they mean in practice. These models or examples help students understand specifically what the criteria mean to them. Teacher modeling is very important, as is providing many numerous examples of what particular categories mean, using language that connects criteria to evidence in the tool used (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998).

Stage 3 - Give students feedback on their self-evaluations. Students' initial comprehension of the criteria and how to apply them are likely to be imperfect. Teachers need to help students check their understanding by providing them feedback (from the teacher, peers, and themselves) on their attempts to implement the criteria. Having different sources provide data for comparison helps students develop accurate self-evaluations, and discussion regarding differences in data can prove most helpful (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998).

Stage 4 - Help students develop productive goals and actions plans. The most difficult part of teaching students how to evaluate their work consists of designing ways to provide support for students as they use self-evaluate data to set new goals and levels of effort. Without teacher help, students may be uncertain whether they have attained their goals. Teachers can also help students connect particular levels of achievement to the learning strategies they adopted and the effort they expended. Finally, teachers can help students develop effective action plans in which feasible goals are operationalized as a set of specific action intentions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998).

4.6. Sample of an analytical scoring rubric to be used by EFL Cape Verdeans teachers

Having in mind the strategies discussed earlier I considered some limitations and challenges that EFL students might face, as well as students different levels, I believe that both teachers and students will not have a positive attitude about incorporating this tool in the classroom. As mentioned before the use of student self-assessment implies that

students will have a central role in the class. Unfortunately, in Cape Verde, students are used to a teacher-centered environment. For self-assessment to be effective, both teachers and students will have to change their roles inside the classroom. When I first thought about developing alternative assessment tools at the secondary level, my objective was to help students become more aware of their language skills and language levels. But considering the literature on this issue, I realize how important it would be for teachers, as it will give them valuable additional information to enhance ordinary tutoring and testing. Teachers will know which domain are most of their students lacking proficiency in so that he/she can give more attention on the mentioned areas.

I developed a self-assessment tool for EFL Cape Verdean students from 8th to 10th and 11th to 12th grade, to evaluate their own writing (see APPENDIX F and G). Since Cape Verde EFL students are not familiar with self-assessment, and because of their limited vocabulary proficiency, I have developed a very simple self-assessment tool according to students' different level. Both tools have the same idea and evaluation objective, and I tried to use the appropriate language level for both. That is why in the 8th to 10th grade tool, in the first question, I used fewer categories for them to evaluate. I think that it would not be relevant and would made the question too complex to add sentence structure and paragraphing, if EFL students at that level are not writing that much. I also avoided including questions that they would have to argue over or give a reason why, as I did with the 11th to 12th grade one. However, I believe that some 11th and 12th graders may have some difficulties in expressing what is wrong with their writing, if the teacher give them some clues, or an explicit example of what he/she wants students to write about on each question, the task will be a lot easier for students.

CHAPTER 5 - METHODOLOGY

In this thesis, I have been synthesizing and reviewing the existent literature available related to alternative assessment tools. I read books, peer reviewed articles, educational journals, a dissertation and a paper to review some alternative assessments, their advantages and challenges, and some tips for teachers. There were some books that I included several times which are not recent publications, but the authors' contributions are very important and still relevant to this field. In addition, at the end, I made some adaptations of these tools so that Cape Verdean teachers can incorporate them into their teaching evaluation methods.

5.1. Questions

I came up with some research questions that I aim to answer in the future at another stage of my research project:

- 1- Are there alternative assessment tools available which might be used by EFL Cape Verdean teachers?
- 2- Within an EFL classroom which might work best: holistic scoring or analytical scoring?
- 3- If students receive enough training in self-assessment, will it be an effective tool to assess students writing?

CHAPTER 6 - SUGGESTIONS/CONCLUSION

6.1. Conclusion

In Cape Verde education system writing in English constitutes a problem, but the literature proves how challenging is it when it comes to teaching English as a foreign language. Normally Cape Verdean EFL teachers do not give much attention to writing, because they might believe that teaching students the grammar points of the language is more important. They are not aware that no matter if it is first or second language learning, writing skills relates directly to learning and to thinking, and the ability to express oneself is so central in education. Weigle (2012) mentioned that in EFL, writing has become more important and “teaching language as a system of communication rather than as an object of study” has become more important (as cited by Oscarson, 2009, p. 75).

The majority of Cape Verdean teachers, as mentioned before, are using the same old traditional way of evaluating students writing piece, marking errors in spelling, sentence structure, coherence, in the margins (sometimes in code) to the students. Some are still “red-marking” students papers, assigning students a single grade on a paper with no clues for students to understand why they got that grade. Not only their way of assessment need to be changed, but also the fact that they give more importance to classroom activities rather than students outcomes. The results of a study conducted by Aschbacher (1993) noted that teachers’ emphasis on learning activities rather than

outcomes is probably the most fundamental barrier to developing and implementing performance assessments. Teachers usually found it easier and more comfortable to simply cover important curriculum content rather than for improving student achievement (p.7-8). He also observed others barriers to implementation of alternative assessments that Cape Verdeans teachers may face as well: difficulties specifying criteria for judging student work; assessment anxiety; lack of time to learn, plan, use , and reflect; need for training and ongoing support; reluctance to change; lack of a long-range implementation. (Aschbacher, 1993, p.26). However if teachers are willing to use innovative assessment and instruction, and if they receive some administrative support, and continuous technical assistance, she/he may overcome these barriers.

Each different alternative assessment tool I discussed in this paper (portfolio, rubrics, self-assessment, analytical scoring, holistic scoring, conference, rating scale and checklist) can be effectively implemented by any EFL Cape Verdean teacher in the classroom. One might be more challenging than the other to be implemented, one might be better accepted by the students than the other, and one may also require teacher to change the role they always had inside the classroom. However, if students and especially teachers put some effort into it and are open to implement something different for the good of students and teachers all of them can improve the writing assessment process. The two tools I focus on, analytical scoring and self-assessment, are the ones that I believe must be implemented first as an experiment. I chose analytical scoring as it is a very simple and easy to follow guide for both teachers and students. It helps teachers give students a more detailed feedback on their assignment, and it will guide teachers to give students a better and fair grade. In addition it gives students the opportunity to know what

teachers are looking for on the paper and what were their strengths and what they need to improve. With this method there will be no need for students to compare their writing with each other to try to understand the reason why they got a certain grade. Concerning self-assessment, I strongly believe that there is urgency for it to be implemented by teachers, regardless of the subject, or whether if it is to evaluate students writing or another self- performance. Besides the benefits that it will bring to both teachers and students when evaluating an assignment, it will allow students to have responsibility on their assessment, diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses. Being also able to see what more they need to learn and also to infer how well and to what level they have reached their goals for a specific assignment, which may help them feel that they have a much important role toward their learning process. One may ask why not to use the alternative assessment with 7th grade students. It does not seem appropriate to 7th grade students as they face so many changes in their new school environment, with so many new subjects, and with a teacher for each subject. In addition teachers should consider that for a great majority of their students they will have the first contact with the language and teachers should give first attention to the learning process. But if teachers feel that they should use alternative assessment at this stage, I recommend for to introduce it in a very informal way, to give students the opportunity to become familiar with them.

Teachers may choose to start using one of the assessment tools at a time for students to get along with it. Once they are familiar with the chosen tool they should consider to implement a new one. In my case, I would use first the analytical scoring and then as soon as students are reacting positively to it I would start introducing self-assessment in a very simple and informal way.

6.2. Suggestions

In the *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (1994), White's revised book, there is a chapter devoted to help teacher design writing assignments, which he claims to be one of the most demanding and least understood parts of a teacher's job (p. 21). Adopting the right writing teaching strategies or having the effective assessment tools is not enough for students to be truly engaged and to succeed in their writing assignments. Teachers need to offer the best assignments in order to stimulate students' creativity and willingness to learn what the teacher taught (White, 1994, p. 21). With this intention White (1994) used some suggestions, given by Lindemann (1987), about the kind of thinking that teachers should have to make assignments that can support constructive writing instruction, which I recommend EFL Cape Verdeans teachers to use.

- 1- What do I want the students to do? Is it worth doing? Why? Is it interesting and appropriate? What will it teach the students? How does it fit my objectives at this point in the course? What is being assessed? Does the task have meaning outside as well as inside the class setting? Have I given enough class time to discussion of these goals?
- 2- How do I want the students to do the assignment? Are students working alone or together? In what ways will the practice prewriting, writing, and revising? Have I given enough information about subject, purpose, form, mode, and tone? Have I prepared and distributed a written assignment with clear directions?

- 3- For whom are the students writing? Who is the audience? If the audience is the teacher, do the students really know who the teacher is and what can be assumed about what the teacher knows? Are there ways and reasons to expand the audience beyond the teacher?
- 4- When will students do the assignment? How does the assignment relate to what comes before and after it in the course? Is the assignment sequenced to give enough time for prewriting, writing, revision, and editing? How much time in and outside of class will students need? To what extent will I guide and grade students work?
- 5- What will I do with the assignment? How will I evaluate the work? What constitutes a successful response to the assignment? Will other students or the writer have a say in evaluating the paper? How can my assignment be clarified or otherwise improved? Have I discussed evaluation criteria with the students? (p. 23).

While developing an assignment teachers must adapt these guideline according to the specific students, the curriculum, and the individual assignment. Also they don't need to answer all of them in order to guarantee that the right assignment is be given to students.

As a final point, EFL teachers must consider that coherent and appropriate writing is something that many students never learn in their first language, and learning to do so in the second/foreign language is often more difficult. So to start with, teachers have to be aware of the importance that writing has on the acquisition and development of a student language process. Secondly, teachers must consider which strategies work best

according to students' different needs and levels, strategies that will also have to motivate and empower students as good writers. Then they must plan carefully the appropriate classroom writing, having always in mind students' needs, interests, and limitations. Lastly, they should choose the assessment tools that will have positive effects on writing performance, depending on the type of assignment and what the teacher want to assess on it. A combination of both traditional and alternative assessment may work best for students.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A - HOLISTIC WRITING SCORING RUBRIC

WSSU Holistic Student Writing Scoring Rubric *DRAFT* 11/06/08*

Writing Characteristics	Exceptional (4)	Competent (3)	Marginal (2)	Unacceptable (1)
Focus/Purpose/Thesis	Insightfully develops a point of view/perspective/position on the issue and demonstrates a strong awareness of audience or purpose	Develops a point of view/perspective/position on the issue and demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose	Implies a point of view/perspective/position on the issue and demonstrates limited awareness of audience and purpose	May imply a point of view/perspective/position on the issue but with little or no awareness of audience and purpose
Evidence/Support	Evidence is substantial, specific and/or illustrative with sophisticated ideas that are particularly well developed and supported	Evidence is sufficient and consistent with ideas that are well developed and supported	Evidence is adequate to explain some key concepts, but may lack sufficient supporting details	Contains little or no evidence to support ideas
Organization	Organization is logical and coherent, making insightful connections among ideas	Organization is logical and coherent, clearly making connections among ideas	Organization is weak, demonstrating serious problems with coherence or progression of ideas	Organization is so limited that the piece is difficult, if not impossible, to understand
Language and Style	Exhibits skillful use of language, appropriate vocabulary, and variety in sentence structure	Exhibits adequate use of language, appropriate vocabulary, and some variety in sentence structure	Use of language is inconsistent, with limited vocabulary and little variety in sentence structure	Use of language and vocabulary are limited and demonstrates frequent problems in sentence structure
Mechanics and Usage	Is free of most errors in grammar and mechanics	Shows control of grammar and mechanics but may display some errors	Repeated weaknesses in grammar and mechanics interfere with the writer's purpose	Errors in grammar and mechanics are so prevalent that the piece is difficult, if not impossible, to understand
Use of sources/Documentation (if applicable)	Uses varied and sufficient sources effectively and documents accurately	Uses sufficient sources and documents accurately	Lacks depth in research for the issue; inconsistently incorporates and/or documents sources	Fails to document sources or uses inappropriate sources

Draft developed from information gained at faculty meetings and a review of the rubrics submitted and uses several sources of information.

APPENDIX B - CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Check off each item included in your writing.

Important Elements	(√)
My narrative tells about a personal experience or event.	
I have introduced this experience in the beginning paragraph.	
I have described the characters in my narrative.	
I have used dialogue to enhance my writing.	
I have included the responses of characters to the situation.	
I have included sensory details.	
I have used transitional words and phrases.	
I have included an ending to the story.	

APPENDIX C - RATING SCALE

Argument Essay GRADING SCALE					
Area		Poor	Okay	Good	Great
1	AUDIENCE / PURPOSE: Geared to an audience beyond instructor. Reader may be convinced to change his or her mind after reading this argumentative essay.				
2	Appropriate TITLE and strong INTRODUCTION.				
3	Clear, convincing THESIS STATEMENT takes a strong stand.				
4	PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE: Paragraphs start with topic sentence and end on concluding sentence. Quotes are evenly distributed in paragraphs and integrated with your own writing throughout.				
5	SUPPORTING DETAILS: Excellent choice and use of material from sources (summarized, paraphrased or directly quoted).				
6	ESSAY STRUCTURE: Refutation paragraph is in a place that makes sense. Strongest reason (body paragraph) is presented last in series.				
7	Excellent SENTENCE structure. Good syntax, punctuation, consistent point-of-view, spelling, and other GRAMMAR issues.				
8	FORMAT: Correct MLA format, word count, spacing, etc.				
9	NO PLAGIARISM: Up to 30% of essay may be material directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from articles—this is properly cited in-text and in an MLA works cited page.	Okay		Fails	
Your Argument Essay Final Earned This GRADE:					

APPENDIX D - Writing rubric

Student: _____

Date: _____

Writer's Notebook Rubric

	4 Outstanding!	3 Good Work!	2 Could Do Better	1 Need to Improve
Quality	Entries are detailed and show that you are <i>regularly</i> using strategies taught in the mini-lessons.	<i>Most</i> entries are detailed and some show that you are <i>trying</i> to use strategies taught in the mini-lessons.	<i>Some</i> entries are detailed and <i>sometimes</i> show that you use strategies taught in mini-lessons.	Your entries lack details and show <i>little</i> evidence of strategies taught during mini-lessons.
Quantity	You write more than a page everyday.	You write at least a page on most days.	You write less than a page but more than a half-page most days.	You write less than a half-page most days.
Neatness	You <i>always</i> use your best handwriting.	Your entries are <i>usually</i> written in your best handwriting.	<i>Some</i> of the entries in your notebook are written in your best handwriting.	You <i>do not</i> use your best handwriting in your notebook.
Spelling & Punctuation	You <i>almost always</i> pay attention to spelling and punctuation. Someone else can <i>easily</i> read your entries.	You <i>usually</i> pay attention to spelling and punctuation. Someone else can <i>usually</i> read your entries.	You <i>sometimes</i> pay attention to spelling and punctuation. It's often <i>difficult</i> for someone else to read your entries.	You <i>do not</i> pay attention to spelling and punctuation. It's <i>very difficult</i> for someone else to read your entries.

APPENDIX D - ANALYTICAL WRITING SCORING RUBRIC (8TH TO 10TH GRADE)

Student's name: _____

	Needs Improvement	Fair	Good	Excellent	Comment
Spelling and Punctuation Student always pay attention to spelling and punctuation.	1	2	3	4	
Organization and ideas Oder makes sense and it is easy to follow; students stays on topic and it shows some knowledge about the topic	1	2	3	4	
Word choice Uses interesting words, action verbs and descriptive adjectives. Use few repetitive words.	1	2	3	4	
Sentence Sentences are complete and make sense. Student uses subject and verb agreement.	1	2	3	4	

APPENDIX E - ANALYTICAL WRITING SCORING RUBRIC (11TH TO 12TH GRADE)

	4	3	2	1	Score	Feedback
Ideas	Clearly focused on the topic and are effectively developed with specific, relevant ideas	Ideas are somewhat focused on the topic and are developed with a mix of specific and/or general details	Ideas are minimal; focused on the topic and developed with limited and/or details	Ideas are unfocused and undeveloped		
Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	Left and right margins all need capitals, paragraph indented, punctuation and spelling very good	Some problems with punctuation; occasional spelling errors; margins are correct; paper is neat and legible	Some spelling problems that distracts reader; punctuation errors interfere with ideas; parts of essay not legible	Serious problems with obvious capitals missing, no margins, severe spelling problems.		
Word choice and quality Of expression	Uses effective language; makes engaging, appropriate word choices for audience and purpose	Uses effective language; appropriate word choices for intended audience and purpose; not wordy; style fairly concise	Limited predictable vocabulary, perhaps not appropriate for intended audience and purpose; may be too wordy	Has a limited or inappropriate vocabulary for the intended audience and purpose;		
Grammar	Correct use of relative clauses, prepositions, modals, articles, verb forms, and tense sequencing; use of complete sentences	Some grammar problems influence communication; use of complete sentences	Grammar problems are apparent and have a negative effect on communication; use of incomplete sentences	Numerous grammar problems interfere with communication of writers ideas; difficulty to read and understand writer's idea; unintelligible sentence structure		

APPENDIX F - STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM (11TH AND 12TH GRADE)

Name:_____ **Grade level:**_____

1a) - In the assignment I was satisfied with my:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphing |

1b) - But I think that I could improve, or have made mistakes on:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphing |

2- I have used the correct vocabulary words: YES - NO

*If you answered No, explain why:

3- What is strong, or what went well with this assignment?

4- What do you think is weak about this assignment?

5- List 2 or 3 things that you would revise to strengthen it if you had the opportunity to have your writing back.

5- I assess my performance on this task to the grade_____ for the following reasons:

APPENDIX G - STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM (8TH TO 10TH GRADE)

Name:_____ **Grade level:**_____

1. a) –I think I did well in my writing in:

___ Grammar ___ Spelling
___ Vocabulary ___ Punctuation

1. b) - But I think that I have made mistakes on:

___ Grammar ___ Spelling
___ Vocabulary ___ Punctuation

2. I have used the correct vocabulary words: YES - NO

3. List 2 or 3 things that you would revise to make my writing better.

4. I assess my performance on this task to the grade_____ for the following reasons: